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[Nathan B. Brown]

TERRI BROWN

HISTORY 300

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Nathan B. Brown was born in Orange County, New York, on the 31st of July, 1835.¹ His parentage, early life, and details of his marriage and migration to Savannah, Georgia remain a mystery due to an unfortunate lack of information.

It is likely that Nathan married his wife, Mary Dalrymple Pratt, in New York before migrating to Georgia to join the Confederate Army. Mary D. Pratt was born in Fayetteville, New York (1839) the daughter of Addison S. Pratt and Annie Dalrymple.² Mary retained her mother's maiden name after her marriage to Nathan Brown and henceforth will be referred to as Mary D. Brown. Nothing is known of Mary's life before she married and came to the city with Nathan Brown.

Nathan B. Brown served as Quartermaster for the Confederate States Army and attained the rank of Captain.³ It was several years after the end of the war that Nathan makes his first appearance in Savannah. In T. M. Naddock's Directory of the City of Savannah (1871) he is listed as

Brown, N. B., General Superintendent, White Bluff Rd.
Residence at 154 Gaston Street.

1. Savannah Morning News, October 6, 1876
Obituary of Nathan B. Brown
2. Bureau of Vital Statistics, Death Certificate
Mary D. Brown, December 7, 1921
3. Savannah Morning News, October 6, 1876
Obituary of Nathan B. Brown

Nathan disappears until 1874 when he is listed in the 1874-75 Estill's Savannah Directory.

Brown, N. B., Stevedore, 62 Bay Street
Res. Runs North/South two miles west of
Whitaker.

But then in July of 1875 Nathan is mentioned in a general lawsuit as being Director of Savannah Brick manufacturers Company.¹

Nathan again "disappears" until his death during the Yellow Fever epidemic that ravaged Savannah in 1876. Nathan served as a volunteer for the Savannah Benevolent Society and contracted the Yellow Fever while helping other victims of the disease. He died on October 5, 1876 while under the care of Dr. J. B. Read. His obituary² reads as follows:

Captain Nathan B. Brown, Stevedore

41 years. At residence on Gaston Street. Served during the War as Quartermaster, Confederate States Army. Born in Orange County, N.Y. Was of the Firm of N.B. Brown and Co. (Draymen), then of P.W. Sims and Co., lately in the employ of H.J. Dickerson.

"It may be said of him that he died in the traces doing good." He leaves a widow here and relatives in New York. Died of Yellow Fever.

Nathan's death is also mentioned in the October 6, 1876 edition of the New York Times.

Nathan was buried on October 6, 1876 at Laurel Grove Cemetery.³ A marble stone with his birthdate and date of death and small inscription reading, "He asked life of Thee and Thou gavest to him.", are all that mark his grave along with an iron cross from the Sons of the Confederate Army.⁴

1. Savannah Morning News, July 9, 1875
2. Savannah Morning News, October 6, 1876
3. and 4. Records of Laurel Grove Cemetery, Vol. 1 A-F

Nathan B. Brown's death certificate reads:

Brown, Nathan B.
108-110 Gaston Street, Chatham Ward
d. 10/5/1876 Color: White Age:41
New York, Yellow Fever
Dr. J. B. Read

On October 22, 1876 the Savannah Benevolent Society dedicated a page in it's official minutes to Captain and Mrs. Nathan B. Brown.

" Where as, it has pleased our Heavenly Father to take from us another of our number, Captain Nathan B. Brown, and our labors in this, our beloved and afflicted city, have bound us together as brothers, and we would give some expression to our sorrow; therefore be it resolved,
That in the death of Captain Brown, the Savannah Benevolent Society has lost one of its most zealous and efficient workers, who had devoted his time and attention in ministering to the sick and distressed; one who came to our aid at the first call, and most manfully did his part until stricken with the disease. What nobler end for a man than to die in the discharge of duty. "

On December 20, 1876 the City Marshall of Savannah, George W. Stiles, auctioned off properties of Nathan B. Brown for failure to pay taxes.¹ Nathan is not mentioned again until 1877 when Mary D. Brown became the Administrator of Nathan B. Brown's Estate. He left property worth about \$8000. to his wife.²

1. This must refer to death taxes. Nathan apparently left property worth much money but little or no cash.
2. Actually, Nathan left no will, but as there were no children or close relatives everything went to Mary.

Mary Dalrymple Brown's last appearance is in the 1921 Savannah Directory Publishing Company's Savannah Listings.

Brown, Mary D., Widow Nathan B.
Residence at 15 Jones St, East.
Telephone-3704

Mary D. Brown died of Arterio Sclerosis on December 12, 1921 at her home on East Jones Street. She was 82 years old and had survived Nathan by forty-five years. At the time of her death Mary was living with Miss G. M. Butler (relationship unknown) and was being tended by Dr. Walter Wilson. The Funeral was held at Mary's home with Dr. Neal L. Anderson of Independent Presbyterian Church giving the sermon. Fox and Weeks was in charge of the burial. Mary's casket was lain atop that of Nathan's in Laurel Grove Cemetery.¹

The official record of the funeral² states that:

For Mary D. Brown-	
Casket no. 18 Black Crepe	\$65.00
Trim 'S'	
Gold Plate " At Rest "	
Flowers	\$5.00
Other expenses	
Total cost	\$136.00
Paid-December 13, 1921	

Mary was also embalmed.

1. There is some confusion as to which lot number at Laurel Grove is correct. Lot 650 and Lot 611 are both in official records, but I found the grave-site at Lot 671-672. The stone is broken and over turned, but it is the correct site of burial.
2. Fox and Weeks Funeral Home. Record Book 73.

Nathan B. Brown was certainly a man of his times. He lived fairly quietly and happily with his wife Mary D. Brown. He had fought for the Confederate Army during the Civil War, even though he was from New York, and had been promoted to the rank of Captain. In civilian life Nathan seemed to be successful with his businesses; His married life was surely a success, after his death Mary seemed content to remain his widow rather than marry another man.

Since nothing is known about Nathan before he came to Savannah it would be fruitless to assume anything about his early life and reasons for joining the Confederate Army.

His reasons for choosing Mary Dalrymple Pratt for his bride are obvious. Love. The Pratt family of New York are quite renowned and very wealthy.¹ But the Brown family must have been "nouveau riche" or not wealthy at all. How then Nathan met Mary is a mystery. It had to be a love match, this was not an arranged marriage as most marriages were during the nineteenth century. Mary followed him from New York to Georgia and after his death remained here instead of going 'home' to New York. After her own death, Mary was buried on top of her husband.²

1. The Pratt family of New York are almost all involved with Botany and Horticulture. Addison Stuart Pratt, III was given a full half page in the New York Times when he died. I believe this is a great-nephew of Mary D. Brown's.
2. The tombstone at Lot 671-72 is broken, fallen over and the gravesite is in disarray. The lot is in a perpetual care area but it has not been cleaned in years.

Nathan's business ventures are virtually unexplainable. He was listed as a drayman, stevedore, and brick manufacturer, but there are no records that he ever went bankrupt or was involved in a legal battle that forced him out of business. Nathan was quite successful and when he died left to Mary several pieces of property worth \$8000.¹ I found no records to show however, what happened to any of his former businesses.

His death in 1876 of Yellow Fever marked the end of a remarkable man. Nathan had traveled, fought in a war, won a rich wife, been involved with several businesses, and had lost his own life while trying to help other victims of the same disease. I wish that I had known him.

Mary D. Brown lived her life as a shadow. She was Mrs. Nathan B. Brown. I feel she wanted it that way. She really had no life after Nathan died - she refuses even in history to become her own person. Mary still remains in the background, lost to the world. She must have been the perfect partner for Nathan. Mary died in 1921 at age 82 years. She was living at a new home with a young girl named G. M. Butler.² There ends the life of Nathan B. and Mary D.P. Brown of Savannah, Georgia.

1. This including the property at 110-112 Gaston Street, now on the Historical Register of Homes, Savannah.
2. Miss Butler lived on East Jones until 1925 when she apparently married or left Savannah. There is no record of her now.

Bibliography

Bureau of Vital Statistics- Death Certificates.
Savannah, Georgia

Fox and Weeks Funeral Home- Record book 73.
Savannah, Georgia

Laurel Grove Cemetary- Records for caretaker, Vol.1
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New York Times - Obituary of Nathan B. Brown, Oct.6,1876

Savannah Morning News- July 9, 1875 and October 6, 1876.
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